

TITLE: **The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program – A success story of cooperative standards and systems development**

AUTHOR: **Mike Cahall, Information Systems Manager**
Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP)

OBJECTIVE: **Provide a basic overview of the ACCSP data collection and data management programs including a discussion of the cooperative standards development process and demonstrations of the ACCSP data management systems.**

ABSTRACT:

The ACCSP is a cooperative state-federal program to design, implement, and conduct marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and to integrate those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coastwide, including the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the three Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the D.C. Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Efforts by state and federal agencies to develop a cooperative program for the collection and management of commercial and recreational fishery data along the Atlantic Coast began in the late 1980s. In October of 1995, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by all of the participating agencies creating the ACCSP.

Using a consensus driven process, and driven by the need to standardize and broaden data collection for commercial and recreational fisheries, the ACCSP has been making steady progress. First, data collections standards were created. Then a data warehouse to contain standardized fisheries dependant data was created, and is being populated. Now, ACCSP is working with program partners in the NorthEast Region to implement an electronic reporting system.

In addition to standards creation, the ACCSP has been fortunate enough to obtain funds that can be disbursed to Program Partners to support improvements in fisheries statistics. Recent ACCSP funded projects include:

- Implementation of Trip Level Commercial reporting in South Carolina,
- Implementation of improved Trip Level data collection and data management in Georgia,
- Development of the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS),
- Research in recreational use of commercial gears in North Carolina,
- Enhancements in commercial data collection in New Jersey,
- Biological sampling of scup, herring and other species in New England,
- Additional Observer days in the New England Groundfish fishery,

and many others.

The ACCSP is managed by an Executive Director (Maury Osborn), who reports to a Coordinating Council composed of policy level representatives of each partner agency. There are a wide variety of technical and policy committees that work with various agencies to continue to improve standards and policies.

The ACCSP has worked closely with Gulf Fisheries Information Network program to ensure the both programs are compatible (where possible) and to assist in the implementation of the national Fisheries Information System (FIS) program.